

Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-10

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----- 099602
R 140411Z SEP 76
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3604

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FROM PRINCIPAL OFFICER

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP ACOM SOPN
SUBJECT: USIS WIRELESS FILE FOR USINT

1. USINT BAGHDAD CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT A USIS WIRELESS FILE IS ESSENTIAL TO REALIZE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF OUR DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN BAGHDAD. THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO PERMIT USINT TO FUNCTION AS A DE FACTO EMBASSY, AND THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER NOW HAS READY ACCESS TO SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE OTHER OFFICERS AT USINT HAVE ALSO BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS.

2. OUR WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS AND POUCH SERVICES, HOWEVER, ARE NEITHER FAST ENOUGH NOR COMPREHENSIVE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THE POST WITH THE FULL RANGE OF OFFICIAL TEXTS, PRESS COMMENTARY, POLICY DISCUSSIONS AND OTHER TIMELY INFORMATION NORMALLY CONVEYED BY THE WIRELESS FILE. IN THE ABSENCE OF THIS CURRENT MATERIAL, IT IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER AND OTHER USINT OFFICERS TO ENGAGE IRAQI OFFICIALS AND OTHER DIPLOMATS IN BAGHDAD'S DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN PRODUCTIVE AND INFORMED DIALOGUE. USINT NOW RECEIVES COPIES OF THE KUWAIT WIRELESS FILE, BUT THEY ARRIVE THREE TO SEVEN DAYS LATE AND ARE THUS OF LIMITED VALUE.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE NEED TO SUPPLY THE USINT STAFF WITH CURRENT INFORMATION, A WIRELESS FILE WOULD SERVE A USEFUL
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FUNCTION IN PROVIDING MATERIAL TO PASS TO THE IRAQI PRESS

THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, WHICH EXERCISES TIGHT CONTROL OVER ALL THE PUBLIC MEDIA IN IRAQ. WHILE THE IRAQI PRESS IS NOT A PROMISING MEDIUM FOR USG-GENERATED POLITICAL MATERIAL, IT WOULD NO DOUBT BE WILLING TO RECEIVE AND PUBLISH SELECTED CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC ITEMS. THIS WOULD BE A STEP FORWARD IN REDUCING THE BARRIERS BETWEEN IRAQ AND THE UNITED STATES AND COULD LEAD TO EXPANDED CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE PRESENT REGIME IS SHOWING SOME WILLINGNESS TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION, AND THE EXISTENCE OF A WIRELESS FILE AT USINT WOULD GIVE US THE MEANS TO ENCOURAGE THESE TRENDS.

4. THE POST WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A NIGHT OPERATOR FROM ITS CURRENT COMPLEMENT OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES. NO ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED. EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF A USIS OFFICER, THE CONSIDERATIONS MENTIONED ABOVE SHOULD WARRANT SOME INVESTMENT OF FUNDS BY USIA IN A BAGHDAD WIRELESS FILE. IF USIA REMAINS ADAMANT, HOWEVER, AND REFUSES TO SHARE IN THE COST, I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FUNDS TO INSTALL A WIRELESS FILE IN BAGHDAD.
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